

Express Mail" mailing label number EV 304936210 US

Date of Deposit: September 15, 2003

Attorney Docket No.14450US03

RECLOSABLE TRANSPORTATION CONTAINER

RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application is related to, and claims the benefit of and priority from U.S Provisional Application Serial No. 60/474,580 (Attorney Docket No. 14450US01) filed May 30, 2003, titled "Reclosable Transportation Container" and is a continuation-in-part of Design Patent Application No.29/182,849 (Attorney Docket No. 14450US02) filed May 30, 2003, titled "Reclosable Transportation Container", the complete subject matter of each of which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

[0002] [Not Applicable]

FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH OR DEVELOPMENT

[0003][Not Applicable]

[MICROFICHE/COPYRIGHT REFERENCE]

[0004][Not Applicable]

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0005] One embodiment of the present invention relates to a transportation container. More particularly, one embodiment of the present invention relates to a transportation container or carrying apparatus for carrying and transporting plants (flowers for example).

[0006] It should be appreciated that plants (flowers for example) are particularly delicate or fragile. The plants may be easily damaged in shipping or transportation after purchase. For example, flowers are available for purchase in bus and train stations and airport terminals. However, these flowers are transported out of the

stations and terminals after purchase for delivery to the intended recipient. It is during such transportation that the flowers may be damaged or destroyed.

[0007] Thus there exists a need for transportation container or carrying apparatus that protects fragile objects (plants or flowers for example) prior, during and after purchase thereof.

[0008] Further limitations and disadvantages of conventional and traditional approaches will become apparent to one of skill in the art, through comparison of such systems with the present invention as set forth in the remainder of the present application with reference to the drawings.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0009] One embodiment of the present invention relates to a transportation container or carrying apparatus adapted to carry objects (delicate plants such as flowers for example). In particular, one embodiment of the present invention relates to transportation container or apparatus that protects such objects prior, during and after purchase. It is contemplated that the apparatus is reclosable, providing for care of the object (watering for example) during transportation thereof. More particularly, one embodiment relates to a reclosable transportation apparatus comprising a container portion and a carrying member connected to the container portion.

[0010] Another embodiment relates to a reclosable transportation container for transporting plants. In this embodiment, the container comprises a generally tubular housing having an opposing first and second ends and at least one replaceable cap adapted to have a tight friction fit with at least one of the first and second ends. The container further comprises a handle removable connected to the housing proximate the first and second ends.

[0011] Still another embodiment relates to a reclosable transportation container for transporting plants. In this embodiment, the container comprises a generally tubular housing having opposing first and second ends and an inner surface defining a chamber, the housing defining two slits proximate the first and second ends. The container comprises a first and second replaceable cap, the first cap adapted to having a tight friction fit with the first end and the second cap adapted to having a tight friction fit with the second end. This embodiment also comprises a handle removable engaging the slits at the first and second ends.

[0012] These and other advantages and novel features of the present invention, as well as details of an illustrated embodiment thereof, will be more fully understood from the following description and drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE DRAWINGS

- [0013] Fig. 1 illustrates a side elevational view of one embodiment of the present invention;
- [0014] Fig. 2 illustrates a back elevational view of one embodiment of the present invention illustrated in Fig. 2;
- [0015] Fig. 3 illustrates a top view of one embodiment of the present invention illustrated in Figs. 1 and 2;
- [0016] Fig. 4 illustrates a plan view of one embodiment of the cap of present invention;
- [0017] Fig. 5 illustrates a side view of one embodiment of the cap of the present invention illustrated in Fig. 4;
- [0018] Fig. 6 illustrates a plan view of the one embodiment of the handle of the present invention; and
- [0019] Fig. 7 illustrates an enlarged partial view of the tab and slot of the handle of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0020] One embodiment of the present invention relates to a transportation container or carrying apparatus adapted to carry objects (delicate plants such as flowers for example). In particular, one embodiment of the present invention relates to transportation container or apparatus that protects such objects prior, during and after purchase. It is contemplated that the apparatus is reclosable, providing for care of the object (watering for example) during transportation thereof. It is also contemplated that such apparatus may be reusable. Figs. 1 and 2 illustrate one embodiment of the present transportation apparatus, generally designated 10, having container portion 12 and carrying member 14 connected to the container portion 12 (in a removable manner for example).

[0021] In one embodiment, container portion 12 comprises a generally tubular housing or shell 16 having opposing first and second ends 18 and 20 respectively. While the housing 16 is generally tubular other shapes are contemplated. Housing 16 further comprises inner and outer surfaces 21 and 22, where the inner surface 21 defines a chamber 24 adapted to receive a plant for example. In one embodiment, the housing further defines two openings, a first opening (not shown) at first end 18 and a second opening (not shown) at second end 20.

[0022] Figs. 1 and 2 further illustrate that housing 16 defines at least one slit (or other shaped opening) adapted to receive the carrying member 14 in a removable manner. In particular, housing 16 defines at least four slits 26, where two slits are located proximate end 18 and two slits are located proximate end 20.

[0023] Figs. 1 and 2 further illustrate that the transportation or carrying apparatus 10 further comprises one or more caps that engage at least one of the ends, having a tight friction fit therewith (or other suitable means). In one embodiment, the present invention includes two caps, first and second caps 28 and 30, where first cap 28 has a tight friction fit with first end 18 and second cap 30 has a tight friction fit with

second end 20. It is contemplated that the first and second caps 28 and 30 may be totally removable or one or both of the caps may have at least a portion thereof connected to the housing (using a hinge or tongue for example).

[0024] Fig. 3 illustrates a top view of one embodiment of the present invention similar to that illustrated in Figs. 1 and 2. Fig. 3 illustrates first cap 28 removably engaging first end 18 and the chamber 24 defined by inner surface 21.

[0025] Figs. 4 and 5 illustrate plan and side views of one embodiment of the first cap 28, adapted to removably engage at least one end of the container portion 12. It should be appreciated that, while only the first cap 28 is discussed, this discussion is also applicable to second cap 30. In one embodiment, the cap has a generally round shape when viewed from above or below although other shapes are contemplated, depending on the application. It should be appreciated that the first and second caps 28 and 30 are removable, allowing objects to be placed in or removed from the chamber 24. Also, enabling the removal of the one or more caps, enables the user to access and provide care for the objects in the chamber.

[0026] The cap has a generally round lid 32 with a skirt 34 extending from a peripheral edge 36 of the lid 32. In this embodiment, the skirt 34 is adapted to engage the first and second ends 18 and 20, having a tight friction fit therewith. In one embodiment, the lid 32 has an lid inner surface 36 defining a groove 38 that runs around the circumference of the lid 32, and is adapted to receive a lip (not shown) of the first and second ends 18 and 20.

[0027] It is contemplated that the transportation device 10 includes a carrying member 14. In one embodiment illustrated in Fig. 6, the carrying device 14 comprises a handle 40 that is connected to the container portion 12 (proximate the first and second ends 18 and 20) in a removable manner. It should be appreciated that the handle may be totally removable or a portion thereof may be connected to the housing (via a tether for example).

[0028]In one embodiment, the handle 40 comprises an elongated member 42 having opposing first and second handle ends 44 and 46. Each handle end 44 and 46 comprises a tab 48 and defines one or more indents 50 and slots 52 proximate the tabs. Tab 48 is adapted to pass through slot 52, where the indents 50 engage the slot 52 in a removable manner (best viewed in Fig. 7).

[0029]In one embodiment, the first and second handle ends 44 and 46 are folded back on themselves forming a loop 52 (best viewed in Fig. 2). It should be appreciated that the first and second handles ends 44 and 46 are passed through the one or more slits 26 in a known removable manner, before engaging respective slots 52. It should also be appreciated that handle 40 may define more than two slots 52 therein, so that the length of the handle is adjustable. Further, housing 16 may define only one slit 26 proximate ends 18 and 20 while the handle 40 defines only one tab 38, one slot 52 and one pair of indents 50. In this embodiment, the handle 16 passes through one slit 26 into the chamber and out another slit 26, before the tab 48 passes through and the indents 50 engage, slot 52.

[0030]In one embodiment, transportation device 10 is comprised of one or more thermoformed materials such as polyvinylchloride (although other suitable materials such as polyethylene and polystyrene are contemplated). It is contemplated that the transportation device 10 may be comprised of one or more material. For example, the housing 16 may be comprised of one material, while the caps 28 and 30 each may be comprised of the same or different material, which may be the same or different material as the housing 16. Further the handle 40 may be comprised of the same or different material as that of the caps and/or housing. It is also contemplated that the transportation device may be clear, tinted, translucent or opaque. Further, a label (not shown) may be integrally embossed during formation or applied in a separate process.

[0031]Other embodiments are contemplated other than those discussed previously. For example, although a generally tubular shape is described, other shapes are

contemplated. Further, the first and second caps 28 and 30 may be the same or different sizes and the same of different shapes. For example, the housing 16 may be wide at the first end 18 but narrower at the second end 20, such that first cap 28 is larger than the second cap 30. Alternatively, the first end 18 may be generally elliptical for example while the second end 20 is generally round for example. Still another embodiment is contemplated in which the apparatus 10 is reusable.

[0032]Many modifications and variations of the present invention are possible in light of the above teachings. Thus, it is to be understood that, within the scope of the appended claims, the invention may be practiced otherwise than as described hereinabove.